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Modi, Pope panel mooted on Ukraine war

Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador mooted a mediation panel comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pope Francis and other leaders to end the Ukraine war.

Mexico's Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard read out the president's proposal at the 15-nation UN Security Council briefing on Ukraine.

"The objective would be clear, generating new mechanisms for dialogue and creating additional spaces for mediation, reduce tension and open the path towards lasting peace," Ebrard said. **P9**

"This Council is the most powerful contemporary symbol of diplomacy. It must live up to its purpose," said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.



Congress members protest demanding the release of party workers arrested for the 'PayCM' poster campaign, in the Legislative Council on Thursday | **NAGARAJA GADKARI**

PayCM row: Cong social media wing member held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

BENGALURU city police have arrested five persons, including a member of the Congress social media wing, on charges of pasting 'PayCM' posters which carried Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's photo and a QR code. Three others, who were picked up for questioning around 2 am on Thursday, have been let off after being served a notice. The five accused, who have been arrested, will be produced before a court after completion of formalities. The arrests were made based on five separate complaints filed by BBMP officials.

Meanwhile, there was no action initiated by the police against the posters which carried images of senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D K Shivakumar as no complaint was filed. "The five arrested are Sanjay, Congress social media wing employee, Siddaiah, Vinod, Vishwamurthy and Madan. CCTV footage in the vicinity clearly shows the five pasting the posters. The arrested are from Laggere and surrounding areas," R Srinivas Gowda, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central), told reporters.

Meanwhile, the three who were detained and released, include B R Naidu, former head of Congress social media wing, and D A Gagan Yadav, social media resource person and nephew of former Congress minister A Krishnappa.

Unruly scenes in House

The Council on Thursday witnessed pandemonium with Congress and BJP members holding placards and shouting slogans against each other over the 'PayCM' row. **P4**

Defiant Cong dares state govt

Congress leaders declared they too will put up posters and court arrest. KPCC chief D K Shivakumar said all Congress MLAs will put up posters in government offices. **P4**

Nationwide crackdown on PFI, 106 arrested

NIA, ED conduct searches across 15 states; top leaders arrested for terror funding, recruiting youth for terror acts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai/ New Delhi/ Bengaluru/ Vijayawada/ Kochi

IN one of their biggest joint operations against terror funding and terror activities, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday arrested 106 activists of the Popular Front of India (PFI) from 93 locations across 15 states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi even as top officials met to discuss a likely ban on the organisation.

During the coordinated nationwide operation, which began at around 3:30 am, PFI Chairman O M A Salam, national general secretary V P

Nasarudeen Elamaram and the organisation's Delhi unit head Parvez Ahmed, among others, were taken into custody. Salam was picked up from his home at Kerala's Malappuram, after the place was searched. Ahmed's residence in Delhi's Jamia Nagar was also raided. Raids were also carried out in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, West Bengal, Bihar and Manipur. The NIA said 45 of the total arrests were made by the agency.

Even as the raids and arrests were underway, Union Home Minister Amit Shah met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and NIA Director-General Dinkar Gupta to discuss



PFI, SDPI workers protest against the raids in Hubballi on Thursday | P9

details of the case, the likely fallout and implications.

"While 19 accused have been arrested from Kerala, 11 have been arrested from Tamil Nadu, 7 from Karnataka, 4 from Andhra Pradesh, 2 from Rajasthan, 1 each from UP and Telangana," an NIA statement read. Among the arrested leaders

in Kerala were PFI's state president C P Mohammed Basheer, national council member P Koya and senior functionaries Jaseer K P, Shafer K P, E Abu Backer, E M Abdul Rahiman, Najumudeen, Samuddeen T S, Yahiya Koya Thangal, K Muhammedali, C T Sulaiman, P K Usman, Karamana Ashraf Moulavi, Sadiq Mohammed, A M Idris, Mohamed Abuthahir, S Khaja Maideen, Yasar Arafat, Barakathullah, Fayaz Ahamed, M Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Mohammed Yousuf and A S Ismail.

K'taka police pick up 15 for questioning

Bengaluru: The Karnataka police on Thursday launched a crackdown against the Popular Front of India (PFI) and 'held' 15 people from different parts of the state. The police said the arrests have been made under Sec 153A and 120B of the IPC for promoting enmity among religious communities and criminal conspiracy. Earlier, Bengaluru Police Commissioner C H Pratap Reddy said based on inputs from the National Investigation Agency and Central agencies, the city police registered a First Information Report (328/22) against 19 PFI members at KG Halli police station in Bengaluru East, on Wednesday. **P4**

If no jobs for Kannadigas, no incentives for you: New Bill warns industries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IF industries or establishments in Karnataka fail to provide reservation to Kannadigas as per the state's industrial policy, they will not be eligible for concession of land, tax rebate, deferment of tax or any kind of grant in aid, said Kannada and Culture Minister V Sunil Kumar, who tabled the 'Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Bill', which was passed by the Legislative Assembly on Thursday.

day, Kumar said the aim of the Bill is to promote extensive use and propagation of Kannada.

The state's Industrial Policy 2020-25 prescribes certain percentage of reservation for locals. It also stresses on establishing Kannada teaching units for non-Kannadigas in industries which have more than 100 employees.

The Bill gives powers to the government to take action against those who violate its provisions. The government said the new law was needed as the existing rules to implement

Kannada have failed to achieve the desired results.

The new Bill stresses on implementation of Kannada in education, employment, policies, communication and technology and introduction of Kannada as one of the languages in higher, technical and professional courses. It provides reservation for those who study in Kannada medium schools in higher, technical and professional education and makes Kannada an essential language for seeking employment in government, local statutory and non-statutory bodies. **P4**

Bhagwat breaks new ground, visits mosque and madrasa

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday broke new ground by visiting a mosque and a madrasa for the first time, expanding the organisation's outreach to the Islamic community.

That the visits happened on a day when the National Intelligence Agency launched a nationwide swoop on activists of the Popular Front of India for alleged acts of terror, indicated an attempt of the Sangh to draw a line between the radical elements and those in the Islamic mainstream.



RSS head Mohan Bhagwat (C) leaves after a meeting with the All India Imam Organisation chief Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, at a mosque in Delhi on Thursday | AM

Bhagwat called on Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, head of the All India Imam Organisation, at a mosque in Delhi's Kasturba Gandhi Marg. **P10**

Cong prez poll: It's advantage Sachin Pilot, Tharoor

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN @TPuram

THE Gandhi family is learnt to have convinced Ashok Gehlot to step down as Rajasthan chief minister and hand over the post to Sachin Pilot, since the former will contest the Congress presidential polls. Gehlot is expected to quit in the coming days.

"Gehlot tried his best to convince Rahul Gandhi that he would be able to handle both the posts. But Rahulji made it clear it was not possible," said a source. "Priyankaji too was adamant that Sachin has to be made the CM," he said. Gehlot then tried in vain to get his loyalist and



Rajasthan Speaker C P Joshi chosen as his successor.

Rahul spoke his mind at a press conference on Thursday when he said the one-person, one-post decision taken at the Chintan Shivir in Udaipur would apply to the presidential polls as well.

A source close to Pilot said, Gehlot in his "desperation"

is still trying every trick to ensure Pilot does not succeed him. "There are attempts from Gehlot's side to delay his resignation as CM till Diwali or the Gujarat Assembly elections in December. But the ploy is unlikely to succeed since Rahul wants the rift in the party to end before his yatra reaches Rajasthan in October-November."

Stonewall to arrest sea erosion hits a wall

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

THE construction of stonewalls by the Karnataka government along the state's coastline in an attempt to stop sea erosion seems to have hit a roadblock. Experts from Kerala and Karnataka have raised objections to the project.

Officials from Kerala Fisheries Department have written to their counterparts in Karnataka and to the Port Authority of India (PAI), stating that the stonewall coming up along Someshwara beaches and other areas is leading to heavy sea erosion and high tides on the neighbouring state's coast. They said the construction is also adversely affecting fishermen.

Experts and officials from the Fisheries Department of Karnataka have also raised similar concerns. They say the sea walls are being built in patches. The walls are being built in the sea, instead of land, which according to them is a futile exercise. They, however, say that the stonewall built in Marwanthe between Kundapur and Bhatkal is good and should be replicated in other places too.

The PAI and Karnataka Public Works Department (PWD) have jointly spent Rs 5 crore this financial year for the construction of 400 metres of stonewall. A metre of the wall costs Rs 1.25 lakh. **CONTINUED ON P5**

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CET rankings: Panel moots two proposals

Bengaluru: A government panel submitted two proposals to a division bench of Acting Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty of the Karnataka High Court on determining CET rankings for admission to UG engineering and technology courses. The proposals are for Covid and post-Covid batch students. The court will pass orders on Friday | **P5**

Hijab hearing concludes in SC

New Delhi: After ten days, arguments on Karnataka's hijab row concluded on Thursday, with the Supreme Court reserving its verdict on a batch of pleas challenging the Karnataka HC judgement refusing to lift the ban on hijab in educational institutions | **P9**